



Hospital tests 'wonder' drug

THE "wonder" drug Lioresal is being used in a special trial at Liverpool's Olive Mount Hospital. It is being tested on 18 patients with severe cerebral palsy aged between 15 and 25 to see just how much the drug can reduce their spasticity.

Lioresal was the "miracle" worker in the case of young Dubliner Christy Nolan whose creative genius was only revealed after it was administered to him, and he was able to communicate using a typewriter.

Consultant psychiatrist to Olive Mount is Dr Raj Arya who told Spastics News: "The trial has only just started and will last a year."

The idea for the trial came from Mrs D. Andrews, the superintendent physiotherapist who noticed an improvement in her patients on the drug and suggested these should be "clinically assessed".

A meeting between Dr

Continued on Page 3

Two pictures prove:

SOMETIMES DREAMS CAN COME TRUE...



... they did for Jag Plah, pictured left, who all his life wanted to be an actor, and they came true for little Stephen, and the loving family which struggled to adopt him.

Jag longed for stage stardom, but the lad from India, handicapped in speech and movement, had little chance till the Graeae company of disabled actors focused the spotlight on him in "Sideshow."

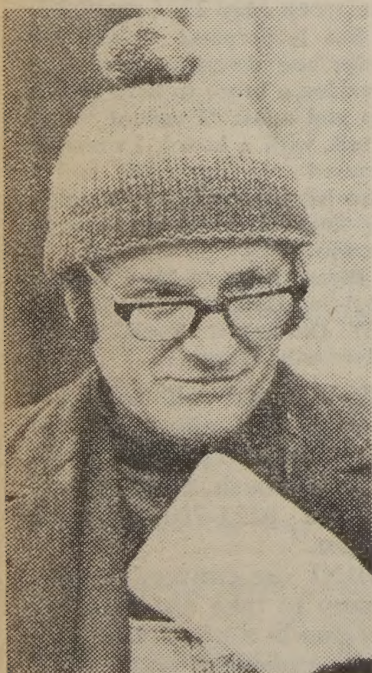
Now the same defects are put into dramatic effect in one of the most telling exchanges in the play... "Does anyone here speak spastic?" And the answer from a deaf player is, "Yes, I've got a degree in it—and I've mastered all the regional accents, too!" Read about Jag on Page 5.

The heartening story of Stephen, the spastic boy found by his new family in an "Adoption Shop"—is told—with more pictures on Page 3.



So what do YOU know about this Year?

● WE know that 1981 is the International Year of Disabled People. Spastics News readers MUST know. But what about the man and woman in the street? We decided to ask. . . .



DOUG Palmer, maintenance worker:

I wouldn't know anything about it, I'm not involved at all, I've got no idea.



ERIC Hall, local businessman and president of Herne Bay Round Table:

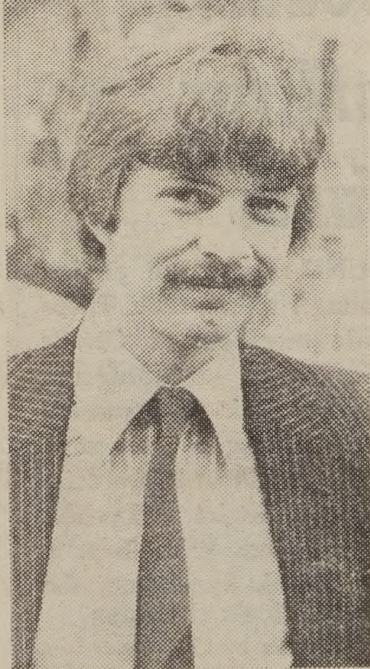
I learnt about IYDP through our Rotary News and I don't think it's patronising to have a special year — I think it's a good idea — anything that gives help is a good idea. I feel sure it will achieve something if it brings the plight of the disabled to people's attention.



MRS Alison Pugh, housewife and mother of Joanne, aged four:

I'm sure IYDP is something I've heard about—yes, it's for the disabled.

I think it's a very good idea—as long as it IS going to help them in some way. I hope it gets round to everyone I know. I know The Spastics Society is doing something for it.



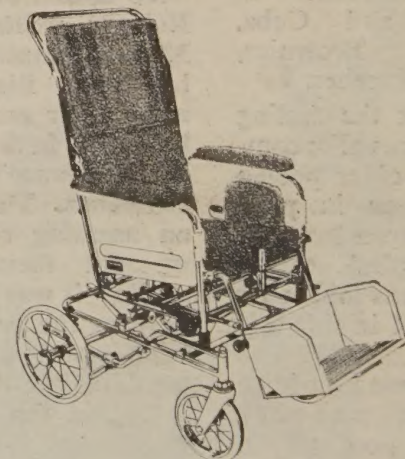
LAURENCE Curtis, an estate agent:

Um — it's the International Year of the thingummy bob—I'm not quite sure what.

I don't know a lot about it—I only bought a television this week. Loads of things are going on for it, aren't they, and I'm all for it.

I wouldn't mind being involved if I had the time.

THINK BRITISH The Newton Avon de Luxe



The Avon de Luxe is now available in three sizes, 12 ins, 14 ins and 16 ins with a choice of chassis for indoor and outdoor use.

Ideal for young handicapped people as the many accessories available tailor the chair to individual requirements.

Send today for further details.

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Newton Aids Limited co-operate closely with The Spastics Society in the development of new aids for the handicapped and in the improvements of existing aids.

● More answers to IYDP questions on back page

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We deeply regret that our service is now being withdrawn. This will leave a gap in provision for cerebral palsied school leavers which is unlikely to be filled in the present economic climate. We apologise if the wrong impression was created. We in no way wish to denigrate the efforts of our colleagues, the specialist careers officers, who give valuable service to all handicapped school leavers.

V. A. McGuirk, Careers and Employment Service, The Spastics Society, London W1.

WHILST I have for many years greatly valued the work of The Spastics Society, as a careers officer with total responsibility for handicapped school leavers, I was disturbed to read in the December issue of the *Spastics News* a comment made by Sue Hennessey, an officer of the society of only 10 weeks' standing. Miss Hennessey states that local authorities do not have officers with specialist knowledge, but it is clear that this new member of staff has not all the facts before her. Most, if not all, local authorities have a specialist careers officer for work with the handicapped.

Many of these officers have considerable experience and all would initially have undertaken a training in vocational guidance which is equally relevant to the handicapped as to the non-handicapped, a fact often overlooked!

In addition, short specialist courses are regularly organised by the Local Government Training Board and other institutions. The local authority careers officer also has close liaison with the Special Education Department, School Psychological Service and the Medical Officer for Child Health which gives this officer a considerable body of opinion on which to draw so as to help the handicapped school leaver formulate post-school plans.

I would like these points clarified as it could be very distressing for handicapped young people and their parents to think that if the Society regrettably withdraws its Careers Advisory Service that there would then be no one else available to offer professional help.

Mrs B. Larter, Senior Careers Officer for Specialist Services, Kent County Council, Maidstone.

LETTERS

SO—there is going to be a conference named "Distech '81" organised by The Spastics Society in conjunction with British Rail. Cost for the whole conference, £125. Are there any bursaries for disabled people to attend, or is it thought we are too addle-headed to understand it?

1981 the Year of the Disabled! As in every other year, it will be The Year of the Able-Bodied Who Think They Know Best.

Miss M. J. Mather, The Belgravia, Marlborough Road, Morecambe LA3 1TN.

● No, Miss Mather, we know that the disabled are not too addle-headed to understand—that's why there are a limited number of bursaries available to help defray the costs of attending the Conference. We're sending you the application form, and others who are keen to attend and have been put off by the price should contact the Conference Co-ordinator, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Seeking your stories

EVERY spastic has a ripping yarn to tell in war and peace. It may be funny, sad, or human and heartwarming.

The writer invites your ripping yarn, with or without photographs, for inclusion in an anecdotal book revealing the human side of "Spastics Work."

Each story must encapsulate some aspect of "spastic life" and should be sent, please, direct to me.

Evan Williams, sen, "Teulu-Annedd," Prestatyn, Clwyd LL19 9LS.

AS 1981 is The International Year of Disabled People, we are hoping to compile a booklet which would be of great help to the newly disabled, those with a static disability, and those who like us suffer from a progressive disability. But before we can start we need your help.

The basis of the booklet will be how you cope with the everyday problems which arise when you are handicapped, for example, how do you wash and dry your feet; your back; shave; do your hair; put on your socks or stockings; cut and peel vegetables; carry your shopping? In fact, the list is endless of the awkward little things that the able bodied take for granted.

Perhaps you have devised

some ingenious method which solves your particular problem. It could be so simple that you are convinced others would also have thought of it. But somewhere, someone may find your method the answer to their prayers.

We don't want manufactured articles, just the ideas you have evolved to make your life easier and more independent around the house, at work or at play. Please write to us.

Georgina Evans, 44 The Highway, Brighton, Sussex. Or Shirley Parker, 7 Ingram Court, Ingram Crescent, Hove, Sussex.

A SONG for handicapped people has been written and recorded by New Yorker, James Elmore.

Mr Elmore's song "A Special Child", commemorates International Year of Disabled People in 1981 and he hopes it will be adopted as the year's theme song. Perhaps somebody in this country will come up with a similar idea?

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I am a spastic and married and my husband is also disabled. We live in a Cheshire home, as you can see from my address, but it is not really for spastics. Most of the people are very ill and a lot of them die at the centre which, as you can imagine, is very distressing. I think that with the building of new married centres, possibly my husband, myself and many others in the same situation could be helped to live more normally and independently.

I was at The Spastics Society's Kyrre Park for five years before I married, and I was very happy there, but they did not have the facilities for married couples, and the Cheshire home was the only place available.

I truly hope that this year of Disabled People will bring to light the needs of all married disabled people.

Mrs Margot Fisher, (formerly Rogers), St Anthony Cheshire Home, Stourbridge Road, Wolverhampton.

● The Society is very aware of the need of disabled couples who marry to live as independently and normally as possible. For some, the Habinteg schemes where couples live alone in flats but have access to assistance if necessary, are sufficient. Harpenden Adult House Unit, Swansea Hostel and Thornton Heath Hostel, run by the Society and Good Neighbours House run by the Stars Organisation for Spastics are among centres which provide sheltered accommodation for married couples too disabled to live on their own. Unfortunately, there is tremendous pressure on the limited number of places available.

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Miss Lin Berwick, London E.

News in brief

TERRY Firth, 36, of Hull, Yorkshire, found his independence severely curtailed when his pedal tricycle was stolen. The trike was bought two years ago for Terry, who is spastic, by members of a local boxing club, and was virtually his only means of getting around.

However the story had a happy ending when a policeman spotted the trike on some waste ground several days later. It had a damaged wheel and a buckled dynamo, which can be repaired.

Following publicity given to the episode police revealed that they have two other adult tricycles in their lost property store, and appealed to their owners to claim them.

PUPILS of the Rutland House School for Spastics at Elm Bank, Nottingham, can now take a ride on a Sputnik, one of two pieces of play equipment given to the school by the New Appeals Organisation for the City and County of Nottingham, with money raised at a fashion show.

A HOLLY Fair held by Worthing, Littlehampton and District Spastics Society raised £2,505. This money will go towards the running of the group's centre in Worthing.

NORFOLK and Norwich Spastics Association has received £450 in the share-out from the Reepham Farm Spectacular. The event, which took place in September, made a clear profit of £1,000 and four other local charities benefited.

A SPONSORED pram-push of 44 miles from Southend to Edmonton has raised over £400 for spastic children. Taking part were Steve Redhead, Paul Saxton, Steve Green, Terry Fisher and Peter Martin of the Green Towers Social Club, Edmonton Green.

CALDERDALE Spastics Society has been given £1,250 by a group of young people known as the "Coopermen." The youngsters raised the money by selling raffle tickets in social clubs and public houses. During 12 years this annual draw has raised a total of £11,000 for the Society. The cheque was presented at the Spastics Centre, Halifax, and the money will help to pay the wages of the centre's spastic employees.

Service was 'a marvellous concept'

IT is no wonder, then, that I and many more like me were filled with a sudden sense of incredulity when we heard of the eventual winding down of the Careers Advisory Service at The Spastics Society. The economic reasons for closing down this part of their work is valid. Having to pay £220,000 VAT I believe to be ludicrous in these times when the

Government is forcing local authorities to pull in their belts, thus expecting voluntary agencies, like the Society, to do the work.

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officer, or local authority careers officer, and be interviewed along with countless others but: neither will have a full grasp of the problems of the cerebral palsied; they won't have the time; there will not be back up for the parents.

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NOW IT'S OFFICIAL: A new life, a new name for Stephen

THERE was very little sleep for the Dooley household in Jay Close, Haverhill, Suffolk, on Tuesday, January 27 — for the next day Gerry and his wife June were due to appear in court, and it was a hearing they had been looking forward to since April last year.

The hearing in Chambers lasted, according to June, between five and six minutes, and the "sentence" they heard delighted them — at last little Stephen aged five was officially theirs!

The Dooleys — their story was told in *Spastics News* and in a documentary on BBC TV — had first seen Stephen in a Dr Barnardo's "Adoption Shop" in Colchester.

Severely handicapped by cerebral palsy, Stephen was incontinent, unable to talk or walk, and tiny. In June's words he was: "A pathetic little scrap. Now he is much stronger, bonnier, toilet trained within weeks, and everybody says how much he's changed."

After the hearing the Dooleys returned to their council house for a "Thank you" party. Explained June: "I wouldn't call it an adoption party just in case something went wrong. I didn't think it would but I kept the thought in mind that it might. And my son, Joe, 13, who has got this great relationship with Stephen came to me the night before and asked: 'It won't go wrong, it can't go wrong — can it?'"

"The whole family, except for my married daughters, all went along to Court, as well as Joe, there was Vicky, nine, and my grandson, Sammy, who lives with us and is also nine years old. Joe has built up this fantastic feeling with Stephen — he understands everything he says."

At the "Thank you" party was everyone who had been involved in the story of Stephen, from the film unit, and social work

departments in London, Essex, Suffolk and therapists and Dr Barnardo's. Mrs Margaret Cresswell who runs the Society's Family Unit in Bury St Edmunds, and had helped the Dooleys learn about caring for Stephen, was also there.

Now the Dooleys are on the move, to the other side of Haverhill to an older-style council house where the walls are strong enough to take the adaptations required by Stephen's condition. There will be a

downstairs bedroom for Stephen and bathroom as well.

He has settled in well at the Roger Ascham School, and the Dooleys hope to move in April just a year after Stephen came into their lives.

"The Dooleys are great ones for celebrations —

this family doesn't need much of an excuse and now we've got plenty of anniversaries to mark — the day Stephen was born, the day he arrived in our family, and now the adoption," said June happily.

The week of the adoption will also be remembered for another event once thought impossible — three days before the court hearing Stephen walked alone and supported only by his frame, across the living room for the very first time.

A small step for a five-year-old, a giant stride for Stephen.

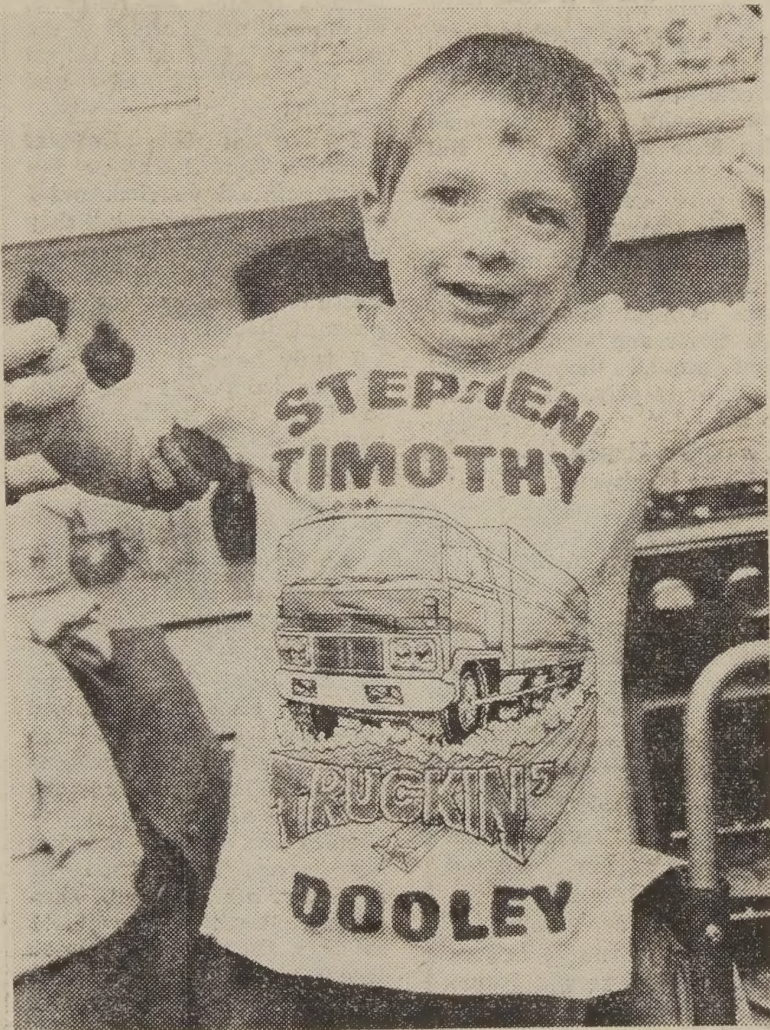
The family — and the friends — who gave Stephen a new start



● THE toast is "Stevie Wonder" as thrilled party-goers cheer the Dooleys on their return from Cambridge County Court.

After an 18 month struggle to adopt Stephen, June Dooley did not dare tempt fate by calling it an adoption celebration. Instead she invited everyone who had been connected with Stephen's case from the moment she and Gerry saw him in an "Adopt-a-child" Dr Barnardo shop to a "Thank You" party.

Guests included social workers from Essex, London and Bury St Edmunds, the director of the BBC TV documentary which featured Stephen's story, and Mrs Margaret Cresswell who runs the Society's Family Help Unit in Suffolk and helped the Dooleys learn about the care of spastic children.



● A NEW tee-shirt and a new name for Stephen after Gerry and June Dooley successfully applied for an adoption order. And he is a new boy compared to the "pathetic little scrap" who first came to them at their Suffolk home.

help them join in the fun with a MALDEN MONARCH

Overcoming the disabled child's mobility problems is an immediate benefit of the Malden Monarch. Based on our Rally Special Go-Kart, the Monarch has been designed for owners who need to be in a sitting position. The Monarch is vastly more attractive — more manoeuvrable — more fun than a wheelchair. It is both light and tough, while operating all day on an over-night battery charge. There are a variety of easy-steering, seating and control options to suit individual disabilities. The bright red Monarch is suitable for both indoor and outdoor use, and goes a long way towards giving disabled children that most valuable asset — independence.



Find out more today from:

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A Division of Malden Electronics Ltd,
Malden House,
579 Kingston Road,
Raynes Park, London, SW20 8SD. Tel: 01-543 0077

Hospital tests 'wonder' drug

Continued from Page 1

Arya and the drug company CIBA was set up. "Interest was shown in our spastic patients and they offered to do the trial here using our bio-feedback machine," said Dr Arya.

"They offered financial and technical help and so we started. The bio-feedback machine measures

the tone of the muscles and the degree of spasticity in them. Only two people know which patients are receiving the drug, which are receiving the placebo, and which are being given nothing at all, and just having physiotherapy. It is a double blind.

"It is very exciting and we are hoping that the drug will relieve the spasticity of the patients' muscles and so improve

the quality of their lives considerably."

Olive Mount was built at the turn of the century as "cottage homes", and with the advent of the NHS was variously used for acute patients and sick children until a decade ago it became specifically a long stay-hospital for the mentally handicapped. It has 162 patients whose ages range from eight to 39.

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Or
Shirley Parker,
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● The Society is very aware of the need of disabled couples who marry to live as independently and normally as possible. For some, the Habinteg schemes where couples live alone in flats but have access to assistance if necessary, are sufficient. Harpenden Adult House Unit, Swansea Hostel and Thornton Heath Hostel, run by the Society and Good Neighbours House run by the Stars Organisation for Spastics are among centres which provide sheltered accommodation for married couples too disabled to live on their own. Unfortunately, there is tremendous pressure on the limited number of places available.

News in brief

TERRY Firth, 36, of Hull, Yorkshire, found his independence severely curtailed when his pedal tricycle was stolen. The trike was bought two years ago for Terry, who is spastic, by members of a local boxing club, and was virtually his only means of getting around.

However the story had a happy ending when a policeman spotted the trike on some waste ground several days later. It had a damaged wheel and a buckled dynamo, which can be repaired.

Following publicity given to the episode police revealed that they have two other adult tricycles in their lost property store, and appealed to their owners to claim them.

PUPILS of the Rutland House School for Spastics at Elm Bank, Nottingham, can now take a ride on a Sputnik, one of two pieces of play equipment given to the school by the New Appeals Organisation for the City and County of Nottingham, with money raised at a fashion show.

A HOLLY Fair held by Worthing, Littlehampton and District Spastics Society raised £2,505. This money will go towards the running of the group's centre in Worthing.

NORFOLK and Norwich Spastics Association has received £450 in the share-out from the Reepham Farm Spectacular. The event, which took place in September, made a clear profit of £1,000 and four other local charities benefited.

A SPONSORED pram-push of 44 miles from Southend to Edmonton has raised over £400 for spastic children. Taking part were Steve Redhead, Paul Saxton, Steve Green, Terry Fisher and Peter Martin of the Green Towers Social Club, Edmonton Green.

CALDERDALE Spastics Society has been given £1,250 by a group of young people known as the "Coopermen." The youngsters raised the money by selling raffle tickets in social clubs and public houses. During 12 years this annual draw has raised a total of £11,000 for the Society.

The cheque was presented at the Spastics Centre, Halifax, and the money will help to pay the wages of the centre's spastic employees.

Service was 'a marvellous concept'

'It's not hard being a disabled actor — I've never been an able-bodied one'

Starring role for 'King Jag'

"EVER since I was a little boy of five foot," says Jag Plah, "I've wanted to be a star — now I'm five foot one!" Wisecracking nonstop, it looks as if Jag, one-time trainee at the Society's Sherards Centre, and son of an Olympic gold medalist, could be on the way to making his dream come true.

For the talented 23-year-old's role in the much-acclaimed production, "Sideshow," was a feature of the BBC2 "Arena" programme on a unique theatre company of disabled actors. Called The Graeae, the company was brought together by Richard Tomlinson, who devised the show.

The name comes from the Greek myth about three old ladies who only had one eye and one tooth between them. They managed — until one day the eye and tooth were stolen away, and they were left with nothing.

According to Jag, this relates to the way disabled people can get together and create something, but if they rely on each other too heavily, they can lose not only what they had but be worse off than they were before.

Array

Richard, Open University adviser on the disabled, has created a comedy in which an array of characters are trapped in a fair-ground freak show under the control of their warden, Uncle Sydney.

Off-stage Jag is a machine operator in West Drayton and lives with his parents in Hayes, Middlesex. He came to this country from India as a child and says philosophically that in his home country his cerebral palsy would mean that, in others' eyes, "I was cursed."

His father, Kirpal Singh Plah, had won a gold medal for wrestling in the 1952 Olympics. The Plah family arrived in the UK on February 29, so by Jag's reckoning: "I've only been here a couple of years!"

He went to a school for the disabled and dreamed of stardom: "A friend of my mother's said: 'If Jag had not been a cripple he would have been a king!'"

With an audition for The Graeae, Jag saw his chance. It is the only troupe of disabled performers anywhere in the world.

"Before I joined Graeae I was asked to join a drama group. For the show I would be carried on, perform for four or five minutes and then be carried off. For the finale I would struggle on using my sticks and afterwards everybody would crowd round and say I was marvellous — but I hadn't done a bloody thing! I'd been carried on and off."

In "Sideshow" Jag is on stage for the whole performance which lasts 90 minutes. He sings, acts and dances, his elbow sticks covered in reflective strip sparkling in the spotlights.

His invalid car is also decorated with the same strip and spells out the words "King Jag." He finds that in this way people are more intrigued by his flamboyance than pitying about his condition.

"Because I walk differ-



● THE scene is the Riverside Studios, and director Richard Tomlinson listens to Jag make a point during a break in rehearsals with new trouper Maggie Woolley. All his life Jag Plah has had just one ambition — to be a star, and with The Graeae he gets his chance. The machine operator from West Drayton is on his way.

ently and talk differently to other people their first reaction is that I'm a bit weird," he grinned. "After a while they think differently, but it takes a bit of doing!"

Cast

The show has toured America, Canada and parts of Britain, and most recently has been performed at London's Riverside Studio to mark the International Year of Disabled People.

In addition to Jag, the

cast boasts the talents of Nabil Shaban, who has brittle bones, Will Kennen confined to a wheelchair following an accident, Marion Saunders, who has muscular dystrophy, Maggie Woolley, who is deaf, and Alex Low, who has an artificial leg. Maggie has replaced a previous trouper, Elaine Roberts, who is blind, and so the cast still need to rehearse.

Jag drily observes: "Richard doesn't patronise us at all — he certainly shouts if we get things

wrong! We have to work until we get it right."

Performing live before an audience is demanding for the most able-bodied of performers, and for those with a disability it can be extra taxing. Jag admits:

"I found it very tiring at first because my big problem, being spastic, was concentrating — I found I was continually being distracted for instance by something catching my eye, perhaps somebody in the audience. Also being spastic I found it tremendously hard to control my face — there was a tendency for my face to break into a smile when I was supposed to look solemn!"

Jokes

The disciplines of theatrical life have spilled over into his private life — for the better. "I find now that instead of feeling that I've got to crack jokes all the time as a defence I can get along with people more easily. It's easier to be the real me."

As a means of breaking

down barriers between the able-bodied and disabled, "Sideshow" has all the power of an atom bomb. Jag cites one example:

"We were going to do a show at a university and before the performance we sat at a table in the bar. Students came in to get drinks — but everywhere you looked every table next to us was empty. After the show there were so many people surrounding us we were more crowded than the bar! We were completely accepted!"

"Before the show we were just a bunch of cripples — after it we were people to them. It's not too hard being a disabled performer because I've never been an able-bodied one."

And like all actors Jag doesn't whistle in the dressing room before a show — an old theatrical superstition has it that to whistle brings bad luck.

"I make sure I never whistle in the dressing room and that's because I can't," he laughed.

LIZ COOK



● JAG, left, and Nabil Shaban, right, in a sketch from "Sideshow," with Marion Saunders and Will Kennen. Their show makes its audiences really think about disablement, brings feelings into the open, and leads to new understanding.

BUILDING TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING

TOO often architects and other professions in Britain show little or no understanding of the needs of the handicapped in housing and public buildings. Yet if integration into the community of those with mobility problems, one of the aims of the International Year of Disabled People, is to take place, a proper understanding of

what is required is essential.

That is why The Spastics Society's Castle Priory College in Wallingford, Oxon, is holding a two-day conference from Wednesday, February 18, to Friday February 20, for administrators, field workers, architects, qualified surveyors, occupational therapists and all those

involved with the design of special accommodation for disabled people.

Applications for the course should be made to The Principal, Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE, and should be accompanied by a non-refundable deposit of £10. Non-Society residence is £27.50, plus £42 for tuition, and for Spastics Society residence NJC rates with tuition free.

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Spastics News forays into Community financial affairs

Give us the facts about VAT and the EEC, we asked. But the answer..?

SCIENTISTS have long pondered the mystery of why dinosaurs disappeared from the face of the earth, and it looks as if they may soon have the answer. However, one dinosaur still exists — the EEC (for Elaborate Economic Confusion) dinosaur which still makes forays from its lair in Brussels.

In Britain, charities such as The Spastics Society are charged VAT at 15 per cent on services to the disabled, while local authorities providing identical services are relieved of the tax. How do voluntary organisations fare in the other nine countries that make up the European Economic Community?

The answer is one of the great mysteries of our time. Well . . . that is OUR story after Spastics News spent many hours on the telephone to the London embassies of the EEC 10, putting that question (which seemed such a simple one).

BELGIUM: Here three rates of VAT are levied—at 6 per cent, 16 per cent and 25 per cent. Services are usually charged 16 per cent said the Belgium Embassy. But in answer to the query regarding charity relief the reply was: "Just depends—please write to Brussels."

DENMARK: Vat is charged at 22 per cent, said the Embassy: "But charities could possibly be relieved from VAT and also tax—please write a letter to us with full details of this question."

ITALY: The Italian Embassy's reaction to the question was: "Oh, it would take a hell of a time to find out, months and months. The best way to get an answer would be to write to your British Embassy in Rome; to get it from our Ministry would take ages."

GREECE: Just joined the community, and the Embassy said: "It's a bit early for that, the regulations don't come into effect immediately. I don't think anything can have been arranged."

LUXEMBOURG. The Embassy said: "Our economic adviser is at a meeting—she may have the answer at her fingertips—if not we will telex Luxembourg for you—it will be no problem." And three days later: "We have been trying to find the answer for three days—I'm afraid there are so many rules and regulations."

Eventually the answer came that no VAT is charged if the organisation is recognised by the authorities.

HOLLAND: The Netherlands Embassy explained: "I've tried to look this up, but our findings are not very conclusive. There is a Dutch VAT Act which says supplies and services by certain charities and organisations would be relieved. The main rate is 18 per cent, but though we think charities would be relieved, one would have to go into it further."

FRANCE: The French Embassy's response was to the point: "We have no regulations about charities—they would be considered as consumers."

WEST GERMANY: With the efficiency and precision that are the hallmarks of the German nation their economic adviser said, without hesitation: "Ah! Article 4 No 18—no VAT on services provided by officially recognised organisations. There is a special list of organisations which are exempt—the Red Cross and so on. Certain conditions have to be met—the relief is not automatic, you understand."

IRELAND: The Irish Embassy asked to be rung back for the answer, but when rung there was no reply. However, it eventually transpired that an identical situation exists in the Emerald Isle with local authorities exempt from the 15 per cent VAT imposed on charities.

Not a case of the luck of the Irish.

So . . . we would love to be able to give you a concise, up-to-the-minute factual guide to the way VAT laws work in our fellow Common Market countries, but we have to admit our plan went slightly awry. But we did try! And discovering facts about the EEC is something of a nightmare to the down-to-earth, average, "all the news that's fit to print" journalist. After all — have you ever met anyone who understands the Green £? Or the Common Agricultural Policy? Or the work of the EEC Commissioners? Or . . .

Legal action for rights of disabled?

THE campaign to bring defaulting councils to court over their application of Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act is gaining momentum with more charities joining the fight. In addition to the national charities, The Spastics Society among them, representing the major areas of disability involved when the project was set up last year, the list now includes the Cheshire Homes, the Polio Fellowship, Age Concern, and Outset, the militant group behind "Act Now," which aims to get the whole Act enforced.

Mrs Ursula Keeble, social worker and author, is the trouble-shooter for the project and she stressed: "We are doing this as a matter of principle — not to be vindictive."

She cited a recent case where a local authority were very nearly taken to court because a disabled person had been without a hoist for eight months.

"The Director of Social Services was a very caring person but he was hamstrung by the District refusing the adaptation on the grounds of no money. Pressure was brought to bear, the money was found and in addition to the original hoist being installed, so were nine more for other cases."

"Of course we were delighted, but also disappointed that we hadn't got the chance to enforce the legal precedent through the courts. It's a question of getting the right people at right level together and it's appalling that I'm needed to do it."

"In another very bad case I discovered that there was no head occupational

therapist in a department. As soon as she was appointed she looked into the case which had been dangling for a year, and got the matter settled. That was an example of internal pressure doing the job — in the other instance it was external pressure from us."

"There is a tremendous spin-off in the provision of welfare rights once councils know that we would take them to court and many cases are being settled out of court."

One case she is investigating is the refusal of a council to provide holidays for the disabled, with the minutes of the social services committee revealing that no money was available and no holiday bookings were to be taken, an abuse of section 2.

Two councillors for another authority have provided two cases of hardship where fees are being charged at day centres. But, says Mrs Keeble: "I've got to be convinced that the hardship is caused by this and not some other factor before I can commit myself to taking it up — and persuade the people involved to go to court."

Stars aiming for funds bonanza



● THE art of holding a dart is demonstrated in five different ways by leading members of the Stars Organisation for Spastics. Pierre Picton and Leslie Crowther, on the left, prefer to quirk their little finger, David Jacobs obviously feels a firm grasp is called for, while Dickie Davies and Dickie Henderson went for a comfortable grip when they launched Club Star Darts.

Charity darts plan takes off in pubs

THE target darts players will be aiming at up and down the country as they follow their favourite pub sport will be £10,000 for the Stars Organisation for Spastics, with the launching of Club Star Darts.

It is a national charity scheme sponsored by Club Soft Drinks, suppliers of soft drinks to the licensed trade, and the firm's sales and marketing director, Colin Barclay, said: "We are delighted to give our backing to this major pub charity event which forms a big part of our pub

sponsorship work in 1981."

Testing their skill at the Prince of Wales pub in London's Drury Lane for the launch were David Jacobs, SOS vice-president, Sylvia Syms, Leslie Crowther, Dickie Henderson and Dickie Davies, watched by Nerys Hughes, Carol Drinkwater and Pierre Picton.

Club Star Darts is one of the biggest ever charity darts contests ever mounted, with 14 regional Chef and Brewer companies, covering 1,600 pubs, taking part.

Entrants contribute a 50p entrance fee to charity, and there will be raffles

and other special events to swell the funds.

Pubs have till February 27 to find their individual champions, then district and regional elimination heats will be held until 14 regional winners are left, each receiving £100 prize money.

The Grand Final will be in April in London, with the 14 winners each paired with a celebrity, and the overall winner will then get £500 and a special certificate signed by the star finalists.

A TOTAL of £3,333 was raised during a house-to-house collection in Northampton. The money will go towards an ambulance appeal for Hampden House, the local residential unit for spastic adults.

Ban those cigarettes, help the Society

SMOKING is not only injurious to health, it is becoming increasingly frowned upon as an anti-social habit. Nowadays you are not always welcome if you smoke.

The Spastics Society's "Save a Baby" campaign also pointed out how dangerous for the unborn baby it is when pregnant women indulge in the habit.

So why not, in the International Year of Disabled People, try to give up the weed and help The Spastics Society, struggling along with an outstanding deficit of £823,000, at the same time.

Throughout April, the Society in conjunction with Action on Smoking and Health and the Health Education Council, are organising a sponsored No Smoking campaign. It is hoped that literally thousands of people will do their health a favour by trying their hardest to conquer the habit.

Support to The Spastics Society can be given in two ways—first, by sending 50p of every £1 you save by giving up smoking. Second, by getting your friends, neighbours and relations or workmates to sponsor you while you engage in the struggle.

Once you have triumphed and sent your contributions to The Spastics Society, you will be

Continued on Page 9

A father shows his gratitude

FRED Plews, of Crook, Darlington, Durham, is showing his gratitude in a practical fashion to staff at the Percy Hedley Centre at Newcastle.

Mr Plews' son, Neil, eight, was taught to speak at the centre and in return he aims to raise £700 to buy an electric buggy for another handicapped child.

Mr Plews, a taxi proprietor, has raised £175 towards his target and hopes to have collected the full amount by the end of March.

TOTNES and District Spastics Society has presented £1,000 to Devon and Exeter Spastics Society. This will help to run Vranth House, the spastics centre at Exeter.

In addition the Totnes group pays £100 a year for local spastic children to have swimming lessons. One of its major fund-raising efforts is a stall in Totnes Market during the summer.

THE village of Newton Poppleford in Devon raised a total of £850 during 1980 for the Dame Hannah Rogers School, Ivybridge.

GLOUCESTER young farmers raised £1,080 at a sponsored ploughing match to help a local athetoid girl. The money was spent on a video communicating machine for Sarah Cowley, aged 13, of Siddington, Cirencester.

REGULARS at the Spindle-makers Arms in Preston, Lancashire, raised over £1,000 for spastics during 1980. The cash was brought in by means of weekly "totes," organised by Mrs Margaret Chew, and a massive Christmas draw, with the Mayor of Preston in attendance.

A SPONSORED judo throw has raised over £300 for The Spastics Society. Members of Slough Judo Club, Buckinghamshire, were paired up and given one minute in which to throw each other and the throws were sponsored. Altogether 40 juniors and 16 seniors took part.

MEMBERS of Widden Old Boys Rugby Club, Gloucester, dressed up as a "dragon" made of hessian, papier mache and chicken wire to collect money in the city streets on behalf of spastics.

This strange beast visited many of the pubs in the area, gathering £166 in buckets and the organisers hope to raise about £500 from sponsors.

NORTH Surrey group of The Spastics Society raised a record total of £1,000 with its Christmas fair. The money will go towards the maintenance of the Spastic Work Centre in Kingston, now 26 years old.

Invaders from space lose out to the fun of Jackie's computer maths

YOU could try asking teenager Jackie Peacock if she'd like to play a game of "Space Invaders" on the computer installed in the classroom of the Percy Hedley School for Spastics, Newcastle upon Tyne, but the chances are she'd turn it down.

For Jackie, aged 15 and severely handicapped by cerebral palsy, has shown a startling aptitude for using the computer for what it is designed for — work not play.

Other youngsters have appeared in juvenile courts on charges of theft relating to their obsession with playing the game in amusement arcades and cafes at 10p a time—Jackie would much rather be doing maths.

The highly sophisticated "Apple 2" computer was presented to the school by the Ponteland Ladies Spastics Association and already another is on order after fund raising by the local Territorial Army cadets.

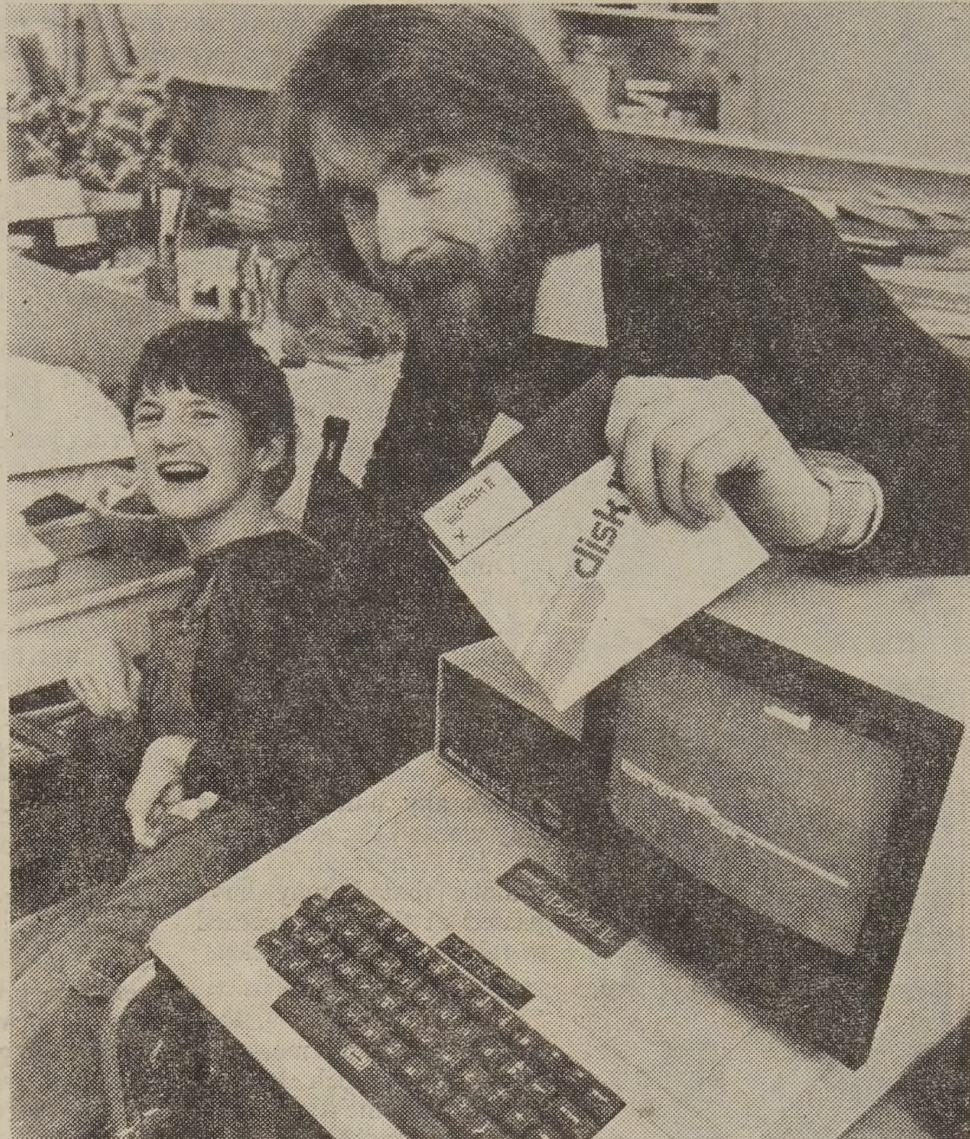
Jackie, who is confined to a wheelchair and unable to speak, is now able to produce all her written work in every academic subject, and is delighting the staff with her progress.

The programmes have been devised by Gordon Flanagan, medical psychologist, and headmaster David Johnston is very pleased with the result.

"Jackie is a highly intelligent girl and she has come off her 'Possum' machine and on to the computer with the most exciting results. There is no doubt in my mind that it has made a tremendous difference to the quality and quantity of her work.

"What is fascinating is that not only can this computer do the most complex of programmes, it also enables Jackie, an athetoid with no control of her arms and hands—to draw! She uses a joystick to draw on the screen and when she is satisfied with the image it is then printed out. The possibilities are endless and absolutely fascinating."

Mr Johnston scoffs at the stories surfacing of "space invader" games being used by handicapped children who are transformed from being illiterate and slow to "super-brains" through them. "We've had these TV games for years and it gives the children fun—but these claims are extravagant. We're not here to play but



prepare children for the future, and electronics are making this easier.

And a last word from the Society's principal psychologist, Lesley Gardner, who said: "The space invader games are important in opening up new areas of communication for people with physical and speech handicaps. Firstly, such devices reduce the frustration that so often interferes with the handicapped person's efforts to communicate; and secondly, they improve the handicapped person's motivation.

"There is a problem that motivation may tend to decrease as the novelty of a particular game wears off—but fortunately there is a very wide range of devices available these days."

And what of Mr Gardner's own prowess as a player? He confessed: "I've tried playing it in pubs—but I didn't do very well!"

JACKIE Peacock with the "apple of her eye" — an Apple 2 computer which has enabled the brainy 15-year-old to speed ahead with maths, English, history and science in the few weeks it has been in the classroom. She is pictured with teacher Mike Bradley.

John joins HQ staff to seek out grant cash

JOHN Tizard, previously The Spastics Society's appeals officer in the East Region, has now been appointed specialist appeals officer, based at headquarters. This newly-created post will involve finding out what grants are available for disabled people, from sources ranging from the EEC through government departments and trade unions, right down to local councils.

He will liaise with the Society's lobbyist and with our negotiator with local authorities over fees, and will keep in touch with Spastics Society projects at national and group level, especially those in danger of being shelved through lack of funds.

John came to the Society as regional appeals officer four years ago, straight

from the London School of Economics. He is single and lives at Arlesay, Bedfordshire, where as a member of the Town Council, he has gained some experience of the workings of local government. He also stood as Labour candidate for Arundel in the 1980 Parliamentary election and, although

defeated, increased the Labour vote.

Of his new job, he told Spastics News, "The Society has always tried to get disabled people the maximum grants to which they are entitled, but some sources of aid may have been overlooked because all the information has never been collected in one place."

FLAG days held in Gwent and at Caerphilly raised almost £600 for The Spastics Society. At Ebbw Vale £195 was collected, £268 at Caldicot and Chepstow, and £116 at Caerphilly.

PLYMOUTH Round Table has presented £700 to Trengweath Spastics School. The money will be used to purchase blinds to black out two classrooms so that they can be used for projector and slide shows.

TV airs Timothy's mobility invention

YORKSHIRE schoolboy Timothy Brooks-bank appeared on the television programme "Tomorrow's World" recently, with his invention which could bring increased mobility to thousands of disabled people.

Timothy, who is only 11, has devised a control system which, fitted to an ordinary wheelchair, can be operated by the lightest touch. This would enable even the most severely handicapped person to move around independently.

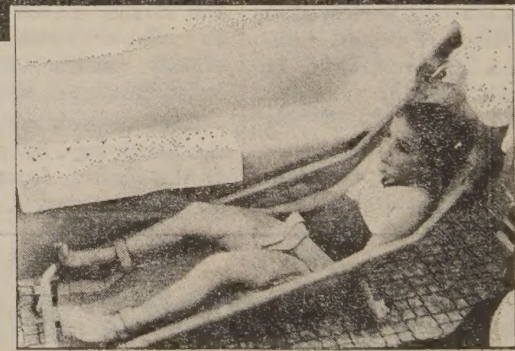
Contest

Timothy's work was inspired by the fact that he has a cousin who is spastic. His invention has been entered in the Prince of Wales competition run by "Tomorrow's World," and has a chance of winning a £1,000 prize.

Meanwhile, Timothy gets on with jobs for his parents at their Keighley home such as fitting an electric doorbell, building an intercom system or rewiring the house.

Not surprisingly, Timothy's ambition is to become an electronics engineer, producing "inventions that will make a useful contribution to the world."

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Giving a new lift to our lives

EILEEN Milnes, a member of the Society's Executive Council has written this special article for Spastics News about the way lifting equipment can make life easier for handicapped people and those who care for them. The pictures show Mrs Milnes and her daughter Anne—happily practising what mother preaches in her article!

ALTHOUGH we live in a world of improved automation and high technology, we, who try to provide a service of caring in The Spastics Society, seem to have a mental block when it comes to making life easier for ourselves when lifting our more severely handicapped people.

During the last three years, while visiting our residential establishments, I have seen very little indication of hoist equipment—maybe the odd one unused. At one of our centres I was told that they hadn't any hoists because they wanted the atmosphere to be "normal." Any remark that I may have passed at the time seemed to fall on stony ground.

Help

This saddened me, as I know how much help a hoist is at home for bathing our own daughter. It could be said that some people would feel insecure in a sling, but I think this could be overcome by using the right type of sling, and plenty of reassurance.

The main reason for the lack of enthusiasm is clear. It seems at the time, much quicker to lift manually, instead of fiddling around with slings, hoists, etc.

I can identify myself so much with this feeling, but a few weeks ago, while our daughter waits for her future to be sorted out away from the family home, a sling was brought in by a district nurse to enable us to toilet Anne.

The nurse and I started to fix it up. I don't know which of my reactions was

stronger, to run away, or to throw the sling out of the door; I just didn't want to know, even though it was going to help us. I was reluctant to have any more equipment in our home. I remember wondering just how much more time this was going to take each day.

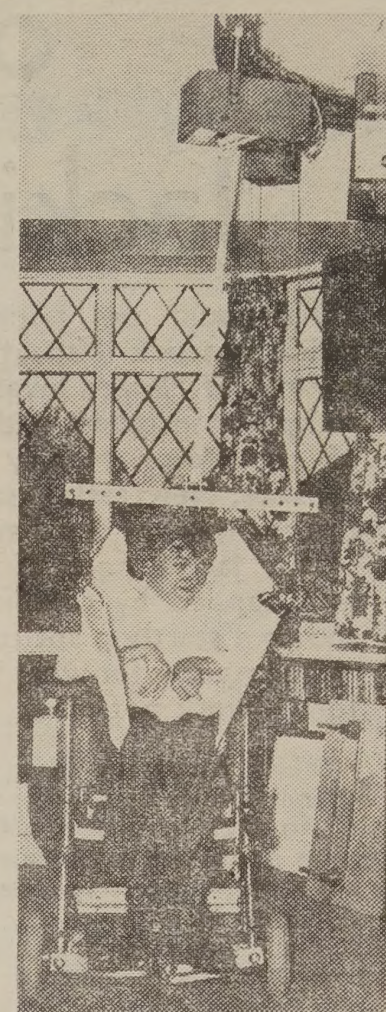
At that point it never occurred to me how relieved Anne was to know that Mum and Dad would not have to lift. "It is just too late to show old dogs new tricks," I thought.

Sling

Now I regret not having been introduced to this sling five years earlier, when we had the Wessex hoist installed. It did not take long for common-sense to prevail. Within a few days we had got used to it, taking but a few extra minutes, with no physical effort whatsoever.

Years ago, I used to talk about having developed in my shoulders the muscles of an all-in wrestler, and lifting was effortless, but now I spend quite a bit of my time in an orthopaedic collar having developed cervical spondylosis. Whilst I am sure lifting is not the complete cause of it, I am convinced it is a contributory factor. My plea is "do as I say, and not as I've done."

I realise care attendants, housemothers and other staff who have been in the "trade" for years could find it difficult at the beginning to adapt, but I want to see young people coming into the caring service using lifting equipment as the "norm." For the few



extra minutes it might take, it could prevent strained backs, neck and arms in later years. If lifting equipment is used to its full extent in our establishments, it may well be that the turnover of caring staff could be reduced.

'Give and take' plan seeks relatives

THE Spastics Society has taken over a "Grandparents by Adoption" scheme as part of its contribution to the International Year of Disabled People.

The original scheme was set up by Mrs Veronica White, of Wincanton, Somerset, though not specifically with handicapped children in mind. The Spastics Society hopes to expand it so that "adoptors" and "adoptees" could be both disabled and able-bodied.

The title "Give and Take" has been used because the "adoptors" need not necessarily be of grandparent age. Younger adults could act as substitute aunts and uncles to children whose extended families are small. The contact would involve remembering birthdays and Christmas, keeping in touch by letter, and perhaps arranging visits to each other's homes.

Said Merle Davies, who is temporarily looking after the scheme, "It would be best to arrange it on a regional basis, perhaps with advertisements in local papers, so that people could be linked up with someone who lives within visiting distance."

The Society would like to hear from people of all ages who would like to "adopt" a relative. If you are interested, please write to Miss Merle Davies, The Family Services and Assessment Centre, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ.

Exercise book for disabled

THE first exercise manual of its kind to be produced specifically for the disabled has just been published. It is the result of collaboration between The Multiple Sclerosis Society and Action for Research into Multiple Sclerosis.

In a simple and fully-illustrated format it shows how people with slight to serious disability can benefit from exercise at home and avoid complications which often result from inactivity.

The book has nearly 60 pages of clear illustrations and simple instructions and is designed to fold back on itself so the user can follow them while actually doing each exercise.

The exercises are grouped in order of difficulty and parts of the body to provide benefit for people with varying degrees of ability.

The manual is available by post from the MS Society, 286 Munster Road, Fulham, London SW6 6AP, or ARMS, 71 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8TR, at £4.50 (or £2.50 to members of either organisation). Both prices include post and packing.



VAC in Essex

THE Visiting Aids Centre, a mobile exhibition trailer, trailer, organised by The Spastics Society and financed by the DHSS, travels the country to enable handicapped and elderly people to see what helpful aids are on the market.

The centre's next venue is the Shopping Precinct, Chelmsford, Essex, from February 10 to Saturday, February 14.

Society seeks new writing talent

THE Spastics Society's annual literary contest in honour this year of The International Year of Disabled People is now open for contributions, and the closing date for entries is April 4. Handicapped people of all types and ages are eligible to enter from all parts of Great Britain.

Categories are: Schoolchildren up to and including 11 years of age. Entries not to exceed 1,000 words. First prize £15; second prize £10.

Adolescents, age 12 to 17 years. Entries not to exceed 2,000 words. First prize £50; second prize £25.

Adults, age 18 years and over. First prize £50; second prize £25.

Poetry: No guide to length can be given. Any verse form may be used.

Schoolchildren up to and including 12 years of age. First prize £15; second prize £10.

Teenagers and adults, age 13 years and over. First prize £50; second prize £25.

Winners of the contest will be invited to a celebration lunch in London and to attend the prizegiving ceremony afterwards, with all expenses paid.

Send for application forms now to Mrs Nina Heycock, Organiser, 35 Harrington Gardens, South Kensington, London SW7 4JT.

Variety and value in spring catalogue

PUNCH bags and porcelain miniatures, silver-plated statuettes and hard-wearing gardening equipment are just some of the 500-plus items in the first-ever spring catalogue which is now with the Society's local groups.

Some of the gifts are linked to special occasions in spring such as Mothering Sunday and Easter, with a look forward to Father's Day a little later on, so aprons emblazoned to the "Best Mother in the World," the "World's greatest Dad" mementoes, and china egg decorations are all available.

In addition there is a wide range of cards suit-

able for all events, with the bonus of being less expensive than those in the shops and certainly less than the cost of the stamp to send them.

The brochures can be ordered from Maura Taylor at The Spastics

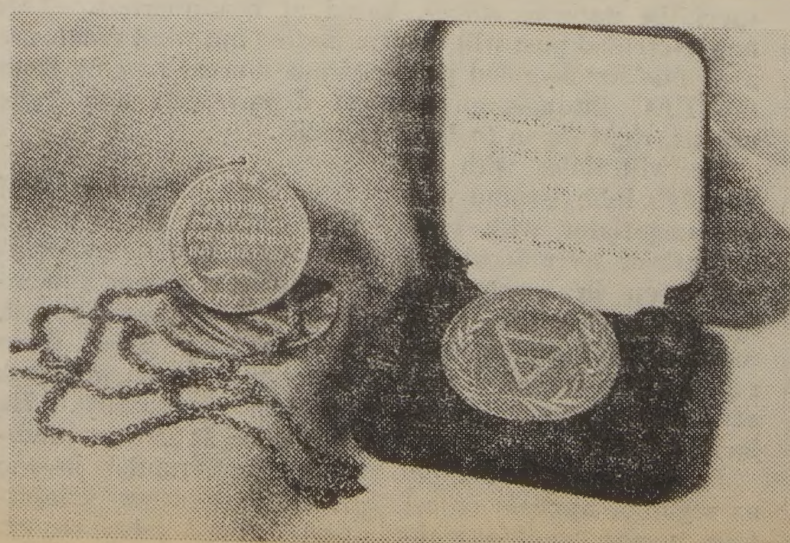
Society's headquarters, as can two very special creations specially made by craftsmen at the Royal Mint.

They are a magnificent medallion and pendant to commemorate the International Year of Disabled

People, with the IYDP logo on one side and the aims spelt out on the reverse: Attitudes, Prevention, Participation, Integration, with the full title of the year inscribed round them. The medallion is 1½ inches across and comes in a presentation case. The pendant measures 1½ inches, has a 27 inch matching chain, and is encased in a velvet pouch.

Made in the traditional manner at the Mint, the two silver mementoes were chosen by IYDP because it was felt they would be ideal for use by organisations during the year, increasing funds, arousing interest and providing a permanent reminder of 1981.

They are £4.25 each, including postage.



At Mrs Thatcher's reception for IYDP 'Honour your pre-election promises'

PRIME Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher's contribution to the International Year of Disabled People got off to a stormy start when a deputation of disabled people from the Disability Alliance attempted, without success, to present a resolution to her as guests arrived for her IYDP reception at No 10. The resolution called on the Government to honour pre-election promises by introducing an allowance for the most severely disabled.

Eventually Prof Peter Townsend, chairman of the Alliance, handed over the resolution once inside the reception.

His deputy Fred Reid said: "We thought this would be a particularly appropriate moment to draw the Prime Minister's attention to the real problems faced by people with disabilities. The Government should put its money where its mouth is."

"It's no use marking IYDP with just another set of bonanzas like the International Year of the Child. What we want to hear from the Prime Minister is a declaration of intent to bring in a comprehensive disability pension during IYDP."

Colin Low, the blind law lecturer and President of the National Federation of the Blind, bitterly attacked the Government's record on services for the disabled, called the reception a "party for the privileged few — while the mass of the disabled suffer in the country" and termed it "an obscene irrelevance". He refused to attend.

Celebrities, personalities, politicians, and leading names in the field of the disabled were the guests at the reception. Lord Snowdon, President of

IYDP; Baroness Masham; Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Social Services; Health Minister Dr Gerard Vaughan; new Minister for the Disabled, Hugh Rossi; Brian Rix, Director-General of MENCAP; George Wilson of Radar; were all there. From The Spastics Society were Miss Margaret Morgan, Controller of Personal Social Services; and Mr W. Hargreaves, principal liaison officer; and researcher, Mary Holland who is on the prevention committee of IYDP.

Two of the Year's vice-patrons, Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor, and George Thomas, Speaker of the House of Commons, have backed the Year, saying: "The principle of integrating disabled people is one which both Houses have long recognised, IYDP is an opportunity for all of us to make ourselves and the public more aware and look at the ways in which the needs of the disabled can be met."

MPs are being encouraged to hold constituency meetings with disability organisations and employers, discuss local needs with the authorities, make sure their "surgeries" are accessible to the disabled, and speak out for integration.

Long-term IYDP projects in addition to the Great Blue Peter Brings and Buy Sale's £500,000 target, include an appeal for research laboratory extensions in South East London; BP's challenge to Youth "Get Around" project, a competition revolving around aids, publicity and environmental improvement for the disabled; a wheelchair garden competition organised by the Sunday Times in conjunction with Gardens for the Disabled; the Disability Advisory Service is concentrating on mobility programmes. The Department of Transport is holding a national conference entitled "Transport without handicap," in March, with a national mobile exhibition called "Getting There," launched in May, and a rally for disabled drivers in June.

A rose by any other name...?

ONE fact has already emerged in this International Year of Disabled People — hardly anyone knows its correct title!

Information floods into the Spastics News office about the Year, radio programmes and newspapers mention it constantly, and the Year seems to pick up a new name every day. But for the record, it is not ... the Year of the Disabled, the Year of Disabled Persons, the UN Year for the Handicapped, the International Year for Disabled People, the Disabled Peoples' Year, the Special Year for the Disabled, the International Disabled Peoples' Year, and so on, and so forth.

You may well ask if it matters? Surely it is the ideal that it is important, and nit-picking about the right words in the right order is nothing but editorial pedantry. A rose by any other name...

The confusion, however, does give rise to unbecoming incidents like the one in the office when the January issue of *Spastics News* arrived. Emblazoned all over the front page in our biggest typeface we proclaimed: "It's 1981 — the International Year of Disabled People." A Very Senior Executive could barely conceal his delight at, he thought, new success in the jolly game of "Pointing out that the Editor has made a mistake." This is a popular blood sport in all offices which produce any publication.

"Your headline is wrong," he cried. "Fancy not getting the right title. That should be the International Year FOR Disabled People."

He remained unconvinced at the Editor's innocence (on this occasion), so for him, and for everyone else who is making up new titles for this special year even before it gets properly under way — 1981 is the International Year of Disabled People.

Got it?
Good!

The 'sweetest sound' of Sara's first words



—and all because of a 'miracle' machine

IN a dull monotone not unlike a Dalek's, Sara Miller, aged 11, said: "I love you, Mummy," and for Judith Miller it was the sweetest sound she had ever heard. "It was marvellous — it was utterly fantastic — nobody, unless they had been in the same situation, could understand how I felt."

For Sara, severely handicapped by spasticity, had spoken her first words with the aid of a computer and speech synthesiser.

Judith explained: "Sara was slow developing, but we put that down to the fact that she'd had a complete blood change at birth because I was Rhesus negative. Then at 11 months we took her to a paediatrician who examined her and told us the cause was cerebral palsy. It was a great shock — nobody had warned us she might be handicapped."

"We hadn't known what caused her lack of co-ordination — when we were told it was cerebral palsy we knew there was no cure. Later when we had accepted it, we realised it could have been something where the life span is short. At least we know Sara can have a normal life span, and we're very happy because we all love her."

"She's a little treasure and because she's so happy we can't be sad."

Sara used to communicate by using a "foot language" she had devised, and she came to the Society's Family Services and Assessment Centre in London just over a year

ago for her potential to be evaluated. The specialists recommended that she should be allowed to continue communicating in this way.

The next step on Sara's road to "speech" came when Dr Alan Armstrong, a neighbour, visited us after hearing about Sara at a meeting.

"He asked us if we would be interested in a computer and speech synthesiser — it was something we couldn't turn down."

"An article appeared in the Sunday Times about the Irish boy Christopher Nolan, and an appeal to buy equipment for him raised far and away above what was needed. It was decided that others should be helped in the same way and so my husband Derek, a pharmacist, and Dr Armstrong wrote a letter. As a result Sara was one of three children in the country chosen."

Sara's aptitude at operating the Commodore computer and speech synthesiser has pleased but not surprised her family. "We always knew that she was bright, although her intelligence couldn't be assessed. And we always knew she was a chatterbox even though her speech was unintelligible! Now she is constantly mastering the programmes so new ones have to be devised."

And a local appeal to help Sara raised so much money that two more computers were bought — one of which has gone to the Society's Craig-y-Parc school near Cardiff. "We were really thrilled — we not only wanted to help Sara but to help the many others like her," said Judith.

SARA Miller, aged 11, is spastic, unable to talk, move or sit up. Now, for the first time, she can communicate with her parents by means of a computer, operating the keyboard with her toes.

The West Glamorgan rehabilitation engineering movement advisory panel was responsible for providing Sara with the computer, aided by money from the Christopher Nolan fund.

The picture shows Sara and Port Talbot schoolboy David Walker at work on the computer when David programmed cards as part of his computer studies. Now the programming is carried out by Andy Sherrcliffe, a senior computer programmer, whose wife Ann is the Society's regional social worker in Wales.

Picture by Western Mail

'So impressed' by school

BOXES and Dolls collector Simon Davies of Dyfed was so impressed by the work he saw going on at the Society's Craig-y-Parc school, near Cardiff, when he and other collectors paid a visit, he decided to do something special.

He contacted all his friends, and as a result the Wales Regional Fund was swelled by £2,000 from the raffle he organised. The raffle was drawn at the Welsh Guardsman pub by the Mayor of Camarthen, Mrs Helen Thomas, assisted by the former world champion featherweight boxer Howard Winstone, and then Mr Davies presented the cheque to Christopher Robinson, the Society's Senior Appeals Development Officer.

Continued from Page 6

Smoking

sent a certificate to prove your success.

The Spastics Society will do everything to help you. A special pack with tips on how to succeed in giving up smoking, prepared by ASH, The Spastics Society and the Health Education Council, can be obtained by writing now to: David Saint, Appeals Officer, The Spastics Society, 76 Cambridge Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 3LB, telephone 01-594 5983. At the same time you can obtain your sponsorship forms.

Remember, you will not only save money, feel better, but will also have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping one of Britain's most deserving charities.

Guests ride Newton in Majorca

NEWTON Aids Ltd of Salisbury, a firm associated with The Spastics Society, which makes a wide range of aids for the handicapped, have donated one of their wheelchairs to the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain for

the use of disabled guests at Majorca hotels.

The presentation was made by Raymond Arthur, Balearic Islands Zone Chairman of Lions International. He handed over the chair to a party of some 50 guests from the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain, at the Teix Hotel in Palma Nova.

The chair was formally received by Senora Jacqueline de Santiago Moss, a representative of Hourmont Tours. Intended for use by disabled visitors to Hourmont hotels in the island, it was called into service immediately for one of the guests who had damaged the brake handle of his own Newton wheelchair.

WHEELCHAIRS Ashley Mobility

Authorised Distributors for Vesta Ltd's range of Electric and Hand Propelled WHEELCHAIRS in West Midlands, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire (Sales and Service).

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Hay Road, Hay Mills, Birmingham B25 8HY. Telephone 021-772 5364
Also at Warndon, Worcester (Telephone 28575)

The future — and that agonising problem faced by parents

DRAWING up a will to ensure the best financial provision for their children is one of the most agonising problems facing the parents of the handicapped.

Miss Margaret Morgan, Controller of Personal Social Services for the Society, explained: "A typical example is where the parents, now elderly, have looked after their child, who has reached middle-age, in their own home. They have a small sum of capital, probably about £5,000, to leave in addition to the house."

"Under present legislation the maximum sum in savings allowed to a person receiving supplementary benefit is £2,000—if they have just one pound over that figure the benefit is cancelled."

"It is a problem that has concerned the London Regional Committee of the Society for a very long time."

Two attempts by differ-

ent solicitors to draw up a simple, straightforward draft will have foundered because of the complexity of the issue.

"One reason is that legislation is complicated and changes, and so do the abilities and disabilities of the handicapped child, said Miss Morgan."

"Parents sometimes underestimate the capacity of their children to understand and administer their own affairs. The matter is more cut and dried where mental disability is concerned, but physical handicaps can improve or deteriorate."

Benefit

"If someone is left £5,000, then £3,000 would automatically have to be spent on maintenance before a claimant could come into benefit again."

"Where the legacy is left to a person living in a residential centre the money would go on the fees. If they are living in a house left to them it is deemed 'an appropriate possession,' along with clothing and jewellery, but if it is sold because they can no longer live alone, then it is automatically considered as capital."

Miss Morgan cited a



Margaret Morgan

poignant example of where elderly parents with the best of intentions had invested all their capital in a trust to pay their daughter's fees in residential care for the rest of her life.

"The daughter is taxed on this sum and spiralling costs means that soon she will no longer be able to afford the fees—she is no better off than residents being sponsored by a local authority and receiving supplementary benefit."

"Supplementary benefit was designed for people living in the community rent free and receiving a number of other 'disregards' which are quite inappropriate to those living in a centre."

Miss Morgan's advice to parents facing this problem is: "Get a good local solicitor to draw up the will and put the capital in excess of £2,000 in a discretionary trust. Inform the solicitor that The Spastics Society will advise on individual cases to achieve the best provision."

Free

"This is a service provided free of charge by the Society and in fact I have now had a great deal of experience in this area. As the client draws money from the £2,000 capital sum then the trustees can top it up with grants from the discretionary funds."

"One thing the Society cannot do is guarantee that a handicapped person living at home after the parents' death can eventually be placed in one of the Society's centres if it should become necessary."

"But we do suggest people mention the Society in their wills, requesting that the Society is consulted about future provision."

Muscle might money

DURING renovations to an old house at Withington, Gloucestershire, the owner was faced with a weighty problem. How could he get a solid oak beam, 18ft long and a foot thick into place without machinery?

Regulars from a local pub formed themselves into a "sponsored hernia" brigade and agreed to manhandle the beam into place in return for a donation to St Vincents Care Centre, partly run by Cheltenham and District Spastics Association. Despite their self-assumed title, none of the 12 men taking part suffered any injury.

Mrs Hilda Sharp, secretary of the Cheltenham group, said: "We've had all sorts of fund-raising ventures but never anything like this."

Now Peter is paying for his Possum

PETER Odell moved to Alne Hall Cheshire Home, near York, last March after spending 14 years in a hospital ward. He finds it a wonderful place compared with his earlier way of life but there was one snag—the hospital had a Possum typewriter which was not available at Alne Hall.

Peter, 52 and spastic, with use of only his right foot, missed being able to

deal with his own correspondence. But with a donation of £425 from the Possum Users' Association, and a loan of £935 from the Cheshire Foundation, now has his own typewriter.

He is now busy writing to organisations such as the Variety Club, Rotary, Round Table and Lions to see if they can help him with fund-raising to repay the loan from the Cheshire Foundation.

Bygone cash in the rusty tin

WHEN John and Ann Bland took over as licensees of the Old Red Lion at Clipston, Leicestershire, they found a rusty old collecting box for spastics. It contained pre-decimal currency.

The tin stood on a dark corner of the bar counter, with a yellowing label stating "Support the local society of spastics of Leicester and Leicestershire." The metal was so corroded that coins dropped through the bottom when it was moved.

The collection, amounting to £5, has been given to the Leicester and District Spastics Society, which replaced the earlier group. Money, dating back to the 1960s, included a ten-shilling note, 10 half-crowns, 22 florins, 30 sixpences and 72 old pence.

Said Victor Lawrence, secretary of Leicester and District Spastics Society: "Although this is no longer legal tender, I believe charities can redeem it at the bank. We have collectors going round to pick up boxes, but one or two of the old ones may have been overlooked."

Warm-hearted PC's on icy sponsored journey

A SPONSORED trip to the Arctic Circle will help the White Lodge Centre for Spastics, Chertsey, and two other Surrey charities.

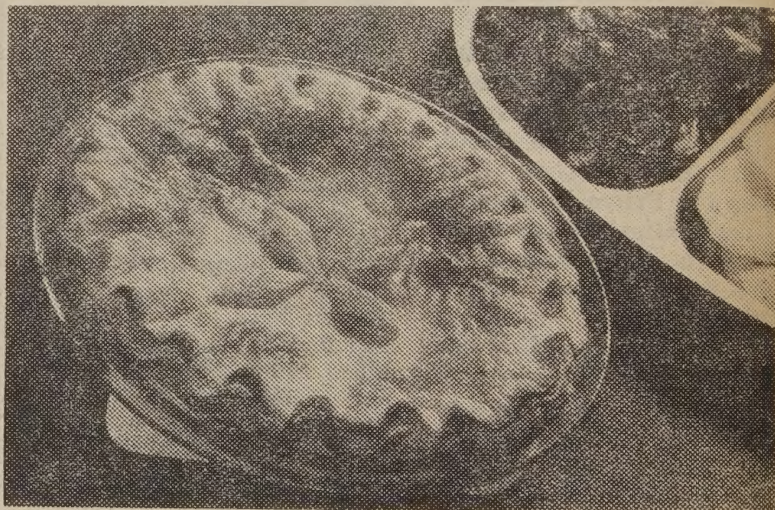
Making the journey will be four police officers from the Burpham traffic centre.

They plan to reach North Cape, the most northern point in Scandinavia and are seeking

sponsorship for every mile travelled in the Arctic Circle. They will pay their own expenses but hope that local firms and businessmen will offer to provide equipment, including their vehicle.

One of the team, Constable Peter Ritchie, has already been to North Cape, but during the summer. Now he plans to return in December with his three colleagues.

February cookery



EVESHAM CHEESE FLAN (serves 6-8)

4oz Onions, sliced
1½oz Home-produced butter
1oz Flour
6oz Wensleydale cheese, grated
2 level tbsp Plum jam (preferably made from yellow plums)
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
Salt to taste
½ pint Milk
1 size 2 Egg
8oz Made puff pastry
Milk for glazing pastry

Roll out pastry thinly, line a 10in (25cm) shallow dish, and make a lid with the remaining pastry. Rest pastry in a cold place for 30 minutes. Gently fry onions in the butter until soft but not discoloured, stir in flour, cook two minutes, then gradually add milk. Bring to boil, stirring; simmer, still stirring for two minutes, remove pan from heat. Stir in cheese and jam and mix well. Next add the sauce, salt to taste and the egg. Mix thoroughly and leave to cool. Pour mixture into prepared pastry case, cover, seal edges well. Use any pastry trimmings for decoration and make a few slits in the top. Brush over with milk to glaze. Cook in preheated oven at Mark 8, 450 deg F, 230 deg C, for 15 minutes on top shelf of oven. Transfer to middle of oven, reduce heat to 375 deg F, Mark 5, 190 deg C, and continue cooking for another 45 minutes or until pastry is cooked through. Serve hot with green vegetables and saute potatoes.

COUNTRY CASSEROLE (serves 4)

1½lb British shin of beef, thickly sliced
6oz Onions, sliced
2oz Dripping
¾ pint Stock
1 tspn Mixed herbs
8oz Carrots, sliced
8oz Turnips, sliced or diced
8oz Swede, sliced or diced
1lb Potatoes, thinly sliced
Celery salt
Salt and pepper
1oz Home-produced butter

Brown meat and onions in the dripping. Transfer to a large casserole. Add all the ingredients, except potatoes and butter. Cover pot tightly. Cook for two hours at 350 deg F, Mark 4, 180 deg C. Arrange sliced potatoes over, dot with butter and sprinkle a little salt over. Return to oven and continue cooking until potatoes are soft and turning brown.

Pat found a busy new life in Australia

PAT Cowley used to be a resident at the Society's Coombe Farm Centre in Surrey, but now she's a Dinky-Di Aussie, settled "Down-Under" and with an absorbing hobby.

However, Pat feels she owes a lot to the time she spent at Coombe Farm—it put her on the right road, as she told readers of an Australian spastics journal. For she was born on the Isle of Man in the early forties, and apart from the fact that she was disabled, very little was known about her condition. She recalls: "I couldn't put my feet flat on the ground. I walked on my toes and I was always afraid of losing my balance—I still am a bit."

At the age of eight she was operated on to help her use her feet correctly, but there was no other treatment available and for that matter no education either. "I couldn't go to a normal school. There was nothing."

When her parents died in the late fifties, Pat's brother and sister-in-law

emigrated to Australia and Pat turned the chance down in favour of going to Coombe Farm. "They got me walking on sticks and as well as that when they found out that I hadn't been at school, they helped me to catch up on my education."

She found the atmosphere at Coombe Farm just what she needed—lively and extending. "In the workshop you were expected to get things done—things you probably wouldn't have done otherwise."

She spent four years at Coombe Farm and then decided the time was right for a move—and move she did to live with her family in Victoria, Australia. For the last 15 years she has worked for the Victorian Spastics Society attending two of its Centres, but once a week for the last four years she has helped out at a veterinary clinic near her home.

It is hard work and keeps her on her feet, but she loves it. "I clean the table between consultations and wash the syringes! She also sits in on the

operations and watches over the patients as they struggle back to consciousness in the recovery room.

Now Pat is on the move again, but just for a long service leave to be spent in Singapore, Amsterdam and an island off the British coast. Not the Isle of Man, however, but Jersey, where Gerald Durrell runs his zoo. Pat is passionately interested in the conservation work done there and her love of animals means the visit is a must.

WHAT DO WE TELL THE CHILDREN?

TODAY'S children are tomorrow's fund raisers and citizens, and The Spastics Society realises how vital it is to interest them in the Society's cause. If they understand the problems caused by severe handicap they will be more ready to accept their disabled fellow citizens in the community, and campaign for full integration. So the Society has a special

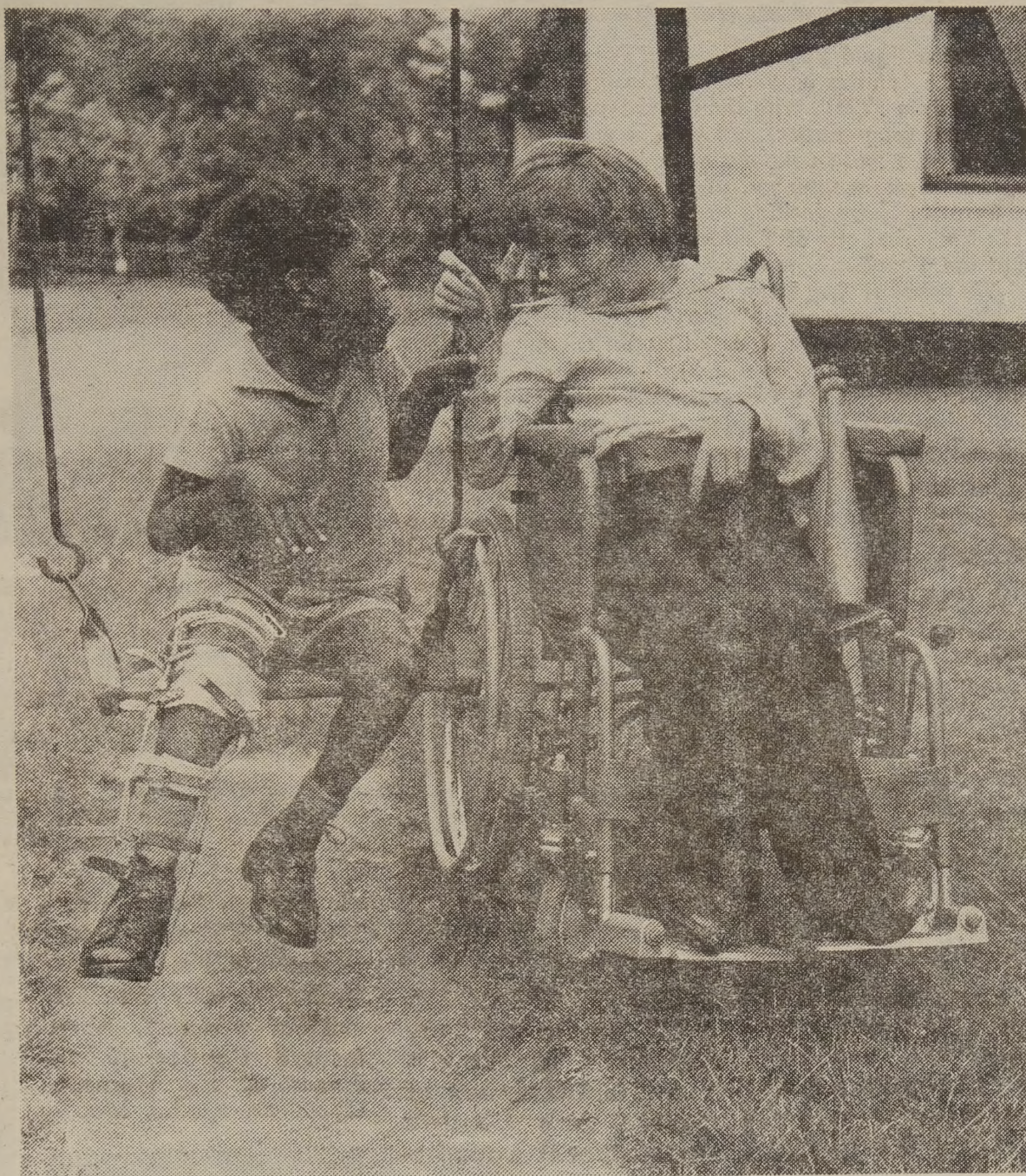
leaflet for them. Above a picture of two spastic children, the leaflet declares: "This boy and girl are spastic," and beneath the picture "Except for their handicap they are just like you and your friends." It goes on to explain the condition, its cause, and what the children can do to help. Here, in extracts from the leaflet, Spastics News shows what the Society does tell the children. . . .

A SECTION of the leaflet explains under the heading "What causes this damage?" . . .

Some cases happen when the baby doesn't receive enough oxygen around the time of birth. Others occur when babies are born too early or too small, or the mother has a difficult time bringing the child into the world. Better care would help a great deal to cut the number of handicapped babies born. That is why The Spastics Society has been running a "Save a Baby" Campaign to try to persuade the Government to improve the maternity services. However, until the time comes when spasticity (or cerebral palsy) can be wiped out, we must do all we can to help those who suffer from it.

Babies

Most girls dream of having a baby when they grow up. One important way that they can protect babies they may give birth to in the future is to make sure that they receive a German measles (Rubella) vaccination while they are still at school. If German measles (Rubella) is caught during the early months of pregnancy it can result in the child being born deaf, blind, spastic, or severely handicapped in some other way. That is why it is so important to be vaccinated. Most schools offer this protection at the right age providing a parent's consent is obtained.



● THE leaflet provides the perfect answer to children's questions about spastic people and the Society, and should be in every local group's publicity display. Up to 10 copies are available free (but do send a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope), and bulk supplies are available in units of 50, price £2.50, plus p and p. Available from the Information Department at Society headquarters.

IMAGINE how you would feel if you bought a new car with a perfect engine—then found that the steering wheel was broken. No matter how grand and shiny the car, or how powerful its engine, you wouldn't be able to drive it because you would have no control over where it went.

Or imagine a telephone exchange where all the wires have got crossed and messages aren't being received by the right person.

Being spastic is rather like that. Though most spastic babies are born with perfect bodies they can't use them or some parts of them properly because part of the brain which controls movement has been damaged.

Control box

Those of us who aren't born spastic are lucky. If we want to pick up a pen or pencil and paper, or speak to a friend, the "control box" in our brain at once passes the message to the right muscles and we can move or speak without even thinking about it. A spastic person can't do that. He might very much want to pick up something, but though there is nothing wrong with his muscles, he can't do what he wants to do because that "control box" in his brain is not working properly.

The damage can take so many forms that no two spastic people are quite the same. Some can't move at all and everything has to be done for them. Some, on the other hand, can't stop moving and their whole bodies shake with jerks and spasms.

Aware of handicaps

Although they may look different from other people, many spastic children and adults are very intelligent people and are only too aware of their handicaps. You can imagine how they suffer when, as sometimes happens, cruel or thoughtless people laugh at them or treat them as if they were silly.

For hundreds of years no one bothered about spastic people. They were thought of as mad, or strange. But we now know that many of the so-called "village idiots" were probably spastic people of quite normal intelligence. The Emperor Claudius, who was laughed at because he had weak legs and found it hard to speak, was probably spastic. It is likely that Samuel Johnson was too, and the poet Lord Byron.

Spasticity (or cerebral palsy, as the doctors call it) can occur in any family, rich or poor and is not hereditary. (That means it isn't something that's passed on to you by parents or grandparents, such as red or blonde hair and blue or brown eyes.)

Why not save litte 'uns?

AGNES Gould, of Bloxwich, Staffs, had collected 1,700 halfpennies in a bottle. She decided to celebrate her 66th birthday by presenting the bottle to The Spastics Society.

Mrs Alma Hill, the Society's Midlands appeals officer, is hoping this gesture will encourage other people to save up their halfpennies for the Society.

Giving group

PORHTCAWL Spastics Aid Group has donated a total of £2,650 to eight South Wales charities. Since its formation 15 years ago, the group has raised £50,000 for good causes.

One of the biggest fund-raising events organised by the committee of 12 members is the annual Twelfth Night dinner and dance. In 1980 this function raised £1,600.

All the organisations to benefit from the latest donation were concerned with handicapped people.

New Zealander's fact-finding mission at Society's HQ

NEW Zealander Tom Hutchins has spent three months in Britain gathering information to help him set up a Spastics Society in his own country.

He told Spastics News that New Zealand has had a Spastic Fellowship for many years. This has been extremely successful as a purely social organisation, helping to break the isolation of spastic adults with evening clubs, day outings and other entertainments. Their annual summer holiday camp always has more applications than there are places.

There is also a Carlson School for the cerebral palsied in Auckland, which was started about 20 years ago. The New Zealand government has only recently initiated training schemes for teachers of the handicapped and before

this, Carlson School was the only place in New Zealand where teachers could gain experience with disabled children. Occupational and physiotherapists also find it a useful training ground.

School

Carlson School is in the grounds of a school for able-bodied children and the two sets of pupils combine for some events. Recently, because of a higher incidence of spina bifida in New Zealand, the government has been putting pressure on Carlson School to take children suffering from this disability, but the parents feel that places should be kept only for those with cerebral palsy.

The Parents' Action Group within the Spastics Fellowship is concerned about the future of their adult children and feels the

need for an organisation which goes beyond a purely social function.

Members wish to set up residential units with a domestic, rather than institutional atmosphere. Many young adults need to be brought out of geriatric hospitals and short-stay accommodation is also required.

Tom was extremely impressed by the integrated housing for both disabled and able-bodied tenants he has seen in this country. He has been to Habinteg in East London and the Neath Hill scheme at Milton Keynes run jointly by The Spastics Society and the local development corporation.

"We have nothing like that in New Zealand," he said.

Matthew and Barry, 18-year-old twins, the youngest of Tom's five children, both have cerebral palsy. Barry, who has recently left Carlson School for a special training unit, is in a wheelchair and has only a little use in one hand. His speech is unaffected,

however, and he is able to pursue a keen interest in Citizen's Band Radio.

Matthew, little physically handicapped but more intellectually retarded, attends a normal school.

Tom has retired early from his job as lecturer in film, photography and video at Auckland University in order to set up the new Spastics Society. His experience will be useful on the publicity side of the new organisation.

Film show

He has already made a film shown on New Zealand television about the accommodation problems of spastic adults, which showed many real-life cases, including a girl in a geriatric hospital who died before the film could be released. It raised a quarter of a million dollars towards a short-stay home. (The exchange rate is roughly 2½ dollars to the £).

As well as accommodation, Tom hopes that the new Society will eventually be able

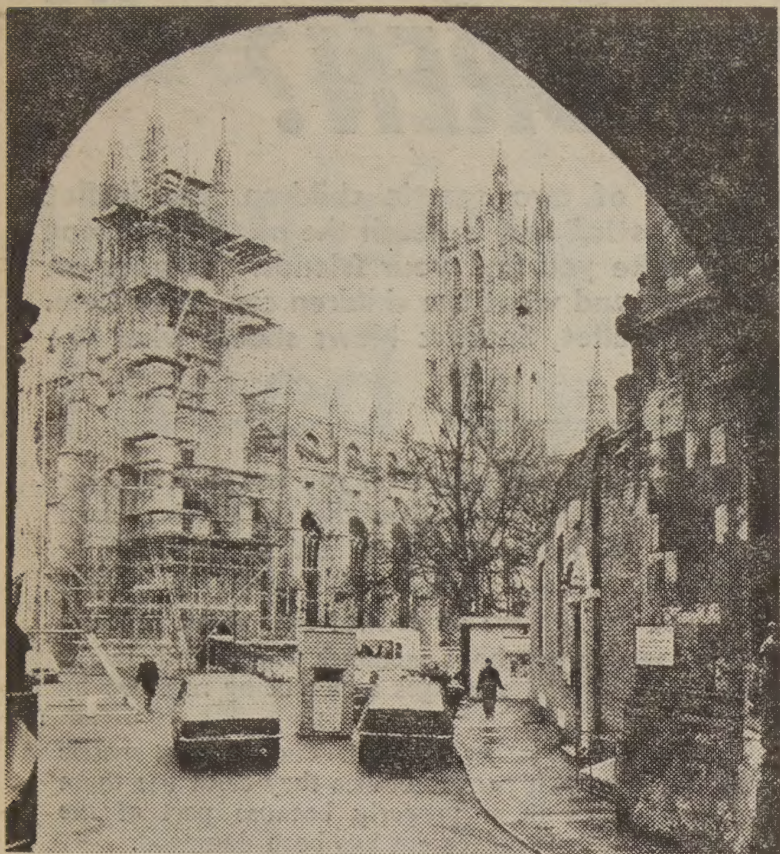
to provide further education and sheltered employment. He has made several visits to The Spastics Society's Park Crescent headquarters to get ideas on publicity, fund-raising and publications.

He says he hopes the Spastics Fellowship will be the main support of the new group. He also looks forward to working with the Crippled Children's Association, the Society for Intellectually Handicapped and maintaining good relations with Rotary International, which has given much help in the past.

He would also like to set up local groups along the same lines as those in Britain. He feels New Zealanders tend to leave too much to the central government.

Like Britain, New Zealand is suffering a recession, with high unemployment and harsh cuts in public spending.

"Economically, it's a difficult time to establish something like this," admits Tom, "but it's got to be done."

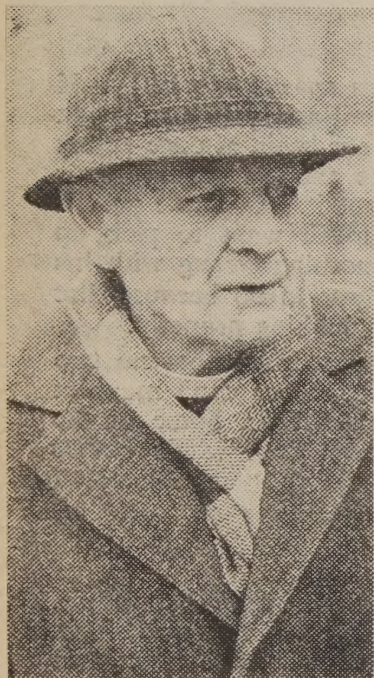


So what do YOU know about IYDP?

THE International Year of Disabled People was launched with Prince Charles as Patron at the beginning of 1981. A month into IYDP, with the television channels screening special programmes, and with a great deal of publicity on radio and in the Press, how much of an impact has it made on the man and woman in the street?

Spastics News decided to find out by asking people in the Cathedral city of Canterbury how much they knew about the Year?

We asked if they knew what the initials IYDP stood for, whether they thought a "special" year was a good idea or if it was patronising, if they thought enough was done for the disabled and what—if anything—the Year would achieve? Here—and on Page 1—are their answers.



REV Geoffrey Carlisle, a retired priest and honorary chaplain to Canterbury Cathedral:

This the Year of the Disabled—I know that because I was reading all about it only the other day in the Bishop of Winchester's Diocesan Notes. I think the Year will draw attention to the needs of the disabled—certainly the Bishop has done his best to advertise the Year.



MRS Carol Waterman, pictured with five-month-old Sarah:

My first reaction to IYDP is to think "Thank God I'm not one!"

There are so many sorts of disability, but I can really identify with those in wheelchairs because I have to push a pram and it is so difficult to get in and out of some buildings. I imagine things like shopping must be very difficult—and being independent must be the priority. To be dependant on others all the time must be awful.



MRS Jill Prescott-Decie, youth leader:

This is the year when everybody is doing something for the disabled but I don't think it should be a one-off thing but the start of a new deal for them.

My son Joseph was nine weeks premature and weighed 2½lb and I was very aware that he might be disabled—a lot of premature babies have spasticity. The nursing staff didn't say that—they were concentrating on keeping him alive, but I had a doctor who answered all my questions. In the event, Joseph is now a bright, alert, normal three-year-old.



DEREK Stingemore, a photographer, said:

I know it's the Year of the Disabled and that's all I can say really.

The only reason I know that much is because of telly programmes like "Blue Peter" which I watch occasionally. I wouldn't know anything about it locally because nothing special is being done. The sole local effort seems to be the Mayoress's appeal for a disabled people's home.

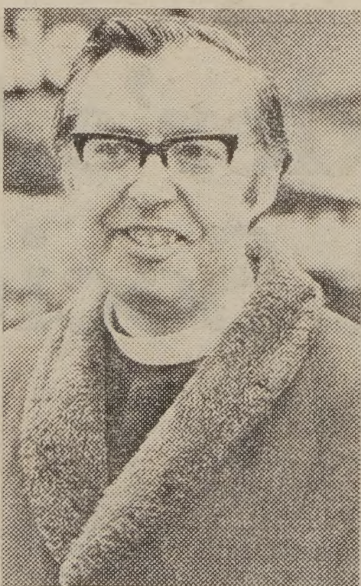
When I see people in wheelchairs struggling to get up kerbs I feel very strongly that access should be improved in the city.



MRS Thelma Ridley-Day:

I do know it's a special year for the disabled and I think it's a splendid idea.

I think everybody should be interested in helping the disabled and I don't think it's patronising. Disabled people need all the help they can get—we don't realise just how much they need.



GORDON Palmer, Minister of the United Reformed Church:

I know it's the international Year of the Disabled and I'm quite sure a lot more could be done for them than is being done.

I would like to see more integration, I think the year will highlight the different problems disabled people face and have to undergo.

They want to be treated as "normal" as far as possible more than anything else, and hopefully that will also be a result of IYDP.

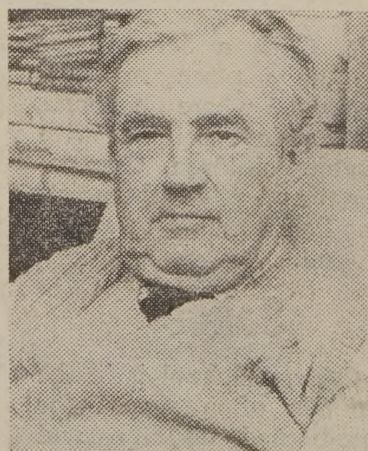
Incidentally, I was the Spastics Society's accountant at headquarters until 1968!



MRS Joy Porter, Lady Mayoress of Canterbury, and chairman of Strode Park Centre's management committee:

I'm very involved with IYDP because my appeal is for Strode Park, a home for 40 physically disabled people at Herne. We're going to open the 14 acres of grounds to other disabled people, provide three mobile homes on the site for rehabilitation and holidays, and also provide a clubhouse. Two acres of woodland will have a nature trail accessible by wheelchair.

We're looking on this year as a chance to get things done.



BASIL Stirton, company director:

Well, it's the Year of the Disabled but I don't see any signs of excitement in it. I fear the disabled are not generally regarded with the same sympathy as others with more, perhaps, "romantic" conditions.

I'm involved with the East Kent Hospice and we've raised nearly £½ million because "cancer" produces an emotional response which the disabled don't.



SALLY Mynett, aged 21:

I haven't heard anything about IYDP—am I stupid? In fact I don't take that much notice.

I'm doing a BA in education and movement studies—that's gym, dancing and drama, at Christchurch Teachers' Training College, I'm in my second year. I'm hoping to teach physically disabled children when I leave because I'm totally in favour of the Warnock report on special educa-

tion, and I'd like to see a lot more integration of handicapped children in ordinary schools.



ALISON Eades, a police cadet, aged 17:

I know all about it being IYDP because I'm a member of the local PHAB club so I spend a lot of time with disabled people, and we've been talking about it.

I don't agree with them having a special Year—after all, for the handicapped each and every year is the Year of the Disabled for them and it should be for us, too, as far as being concerned about them goes.

I've got a lot of disabled friends and although you notice their disability at first you soon get used to it. I think the most important thing about the Year will be letting people know some of the problems they encounter.



MRS Janet Corker, former lab technician and expectant mother:

All I've heard about it being IYDP is from the friends I worked with at the local hospital in the pathology lab. I think it's an excellent idea, the disabled need to be helped round towns with new schemes of access. My baby is due in March and, though this is IYDP and handicap is on everyone's mind, I don't worry at all about anything going wrong at the birth or anything like that.

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